



In-Service training course for VET professionals

HR Professionals

Module 3



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Module 3 – Wellbeing and engagement practices in teleworking

Short overview of the module

The 3rd module of this training will provide you with a body of knowledge on well-being and commitment at work. The module will help you to understand and support teleworking employees and in particular to ensure their well-being and health.

You will have access to several tools and tips to maximize your support in setting up and implementing telework for your employees.

Objectives of the module

The objectives of Module 3 are to :

- Strengthen the skills of HR professionals
- To provide the necessary knowledge on well-being in telework
- To open up the reflection of professionals on their practices
- To provide the necessary skills for HR professionals to set up and implement telework
- To define the role of HR professionals in safeguarding the health, safety and well-being of employees, especially in telework.

Learning outcomes of the module

MODULE #	After the completion of the training, the participants are expected to ...		
	Knowledge	Skills	Competences
MODULE 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding the well-being of the teleworking environment ● Understand the engagement of employees in teleworking ● Know how to define 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn how to be an effective HR professional in the teleworking context ● Learn how to engage employees in teleworking ● Create teleworking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist employees to be the accommodate their workspace ● Create a suitable online work environment ● Take care of employees' health and wellbeing ● Set an action plan to ensure well-

MODULE #	After the completion of the training, the participants are expected to ...		
	Knowledge	Skills	Competences
		employees' well-being strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know how to be a support to virtual teams • Know how to ensure employee engagement. 	being and engagement.

Module Content

SESSION 1 – WELLBEING IN TELEWORKING

The term well-being is increasingly associated with the world of work, including teleworking. Teleworking has become more popular in recent years and well-being at work has moved into the private sphere.



Activity 1: *In your opinion and experience, what does well-being at work mean and what are the criteria to identify it?*

Telework has changed our relationship to work by moving traditional work into the private sphere. Like professional work, well-being at work is an important dimension influencing our relationship to work, its environment, our motivation and our productivity. Numerous studies have shown that employees attach great importance to well-being at work and also when they are teleworking. An employee who feels good at work will naturally invest himself or herself and deliver a better quality of work.

Defining well-being in telework or when working on-site is a vast project as it encompasses several dimensions and is perceived differently by all individuals. Telework well-being can be defined as a feeling of satisfaction and fulfilment in and through one's work. Thus, well-being at work can be observed in two places: physical well-being and psychological well-being. Indeed, well-being at work allows employees to maintain their mental and physical health. Conversely, ill-being at work presents numerous risks for both the employee and the company: illness, poor results, absenteeism, turnover, burnout, etc.

To go further and during the development of the Virtual Teams project, the partners defined well-being at work under 4 criteria¹ :

Physical Well-being: The ability to improve the functioning of one's body through healthy eating, sleep and good exercise habits (Healthy Nutrition, Sleep management, Exercise).

Emotional well-being: The ability to adapt when confronted with adversity (resilience), manage one's emotions and generate emotions that lead to pleasant feelings (generate positive emotions, humour, spirituality, savouring, optimism, adaptability, self-compassion, mindfulness, mental health).

Social – well-being: the ability to communicate, develop meaningful relationships with others and create one's emotional support network (gratitude, forgiveness, verbal and non-verbal communication, empathy, acts of kindness, Mentoring, Diversity and inclusion, social connectedness at work, teamwork, team building activities, Interpersonal skills).

Digital well-being: Describes the impact ICTs (e.g., emails, instant chats) have on people's mental, emotional and physical health.

¹ Virtual Teams project (2022). Toolkit for Virtual Team leaders, HR professionals and Managers. Available at <https://virtual-teams.eu/>



SESSION 2: THE ROLE OF HR STAFF IN TELEWORK

Even at a distance, the well-being of employees should not be overlooked. As mentioned above, well-being is felt both physically and mentally. With the advent of telework, working conditions have changed, and everyone is free to arrange their workstation as they wish, but musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and other occupational illnesses can occur if they are not supervised and made aware of the ergonomics of the workstation (see module 2).

From a mental point of view, the right to disconnect is more than necessary, at a distance, one can be more flexible in the organisation of one's working time but beware of overwork or abuse. It is important to redefine working and communication hours.

For example, in May 2020, IBM CEO Arvin Krishna created an eight-point work-from-home pledge² to and for employees, to ensure their well-being and productivity:

- *"I pledge to be family first.*
- *I pledge to support flexibility for personal needs.*
- *I pledge to support "not camera ready" (on video calls) times.*
- *I pledge to be kind.*
- *I pledge to set boundaries and prevent video fatigue.*
- *I pledge to take care of myself.*
- *I pledge to frequently check in on people.*
- *I pledge to be socially connected with my coworkers".*

² Arvin Krishna, I pledge to support my fellow IBMers working from home during COVID-19, 2 May 2020, LinkedIn, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/i-pledge-support-my-fellow-ibmers-working-from-home-during-krishna/>



Activity 2: Describe the recommendations/ decisions/ actions taken to promote the well-being of your employees while teleworking.

How do I promote the well-being at work of my employees?

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SESSION 3 - WHAT IS TELEWORKER ENGAGEMENT?

An online work environment that promotes employee well-being helps to ensure motivation and commitment to work. It is important to note that an employee's commitment does not ensure their happiness and well-being at work and vice versa.

Work engagement is a psychological state of motivation that corresponds to the attachment an individual feels towards a job and the practices associated with it³.

Commitment refers to the relationship between the employee and his or her organisation and the set of elements that promote attachment and the desire to stay. It crystallises the employee's feeling of usefulness, pleasure, pride and accomplishment. It is a personal state based on personal feelings and sentiments.

A committed employee is satisfied with his or her job, with what he or she is doing and with the image of himself or herself that he or she projects. It is usually in the simplest, most basic and trivial things that the greatest satisfaction, pleasure and feelings of pride and purpose are found.

³ Meyer, J. P. et Herscovitch, L. (2001). Commitment in the workplace: Toward a general model. Human Resource Management Review, 11(3), 299-326.



An employee's commitment to his or her work is essential to the smooth running of the organisation. This commitment is a prerequisite for the well-being and success of an organisation. An engaged employee ensures the proper execution of tasks and promotes motivation and investment. An employee who is invested, committed to his/her organisation and who feels considered and valued.

More specifically, remote employee engagement refers to the extent to which remote employees/off-site employees feel engaged with the team, their work, and the business. With work-from-home here to stay, remote workers often feel less engaged and connected with the company, which can negatively impact overall productivity levels and business performance.

The health crisis has shaken things up and put the role of managers and HR staff in understanding employee well-being and engagement into perspective. Commitment has become a challenge for employee well-being, not a quest for performance. Telework has led companies to promote engagement as a challenge for employee well-being, not a performance challenge. It has often been mentioned during the covid-19 epidemic that telework has led to a decrease in employee engagement. This has not been proven, but on the contrary, a global study (conducted by the Great Place to Work) has shown the positive impact of teleworking on employee engagement.



Activity 3: *What do you think are the characteristics of a committed remote employee?*

Remote employees who are engaged tend to?

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...



Every employee is different and will express their engagement in different ways. However, some trends have been identified across all employees, including 3 main behaviours (Aon Hewitt) :

- Say: The employee talks about his company, and he knows how to promote it. He is an ambassador.
- Stay: The employee stays and wants to stay with the company. He is a loyal employee. They see a future in the company.
- Stive: They perform well and tend to go beyond expectations, beyond the goals set for them.

Commitment is linked to the relationship that the employee has with his work, his colleagues, and his superior(s). It is therefore important that this relationship is maintained at a distance in the same way as work at the office. It is therefore up to leaders, managers and HR teams to put in place and or reinforce the levers of professional commitment of their employees.

SESSION 4: THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN REMOTE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

HR plays an important role in remote employee engagement in many ways. They have an important role because they can influence several factors to foster and strengthen employee engagement, especially in telework. It is important to consider the following levers as drivers of engagement: (the list is not exhaustive but contains the main levers).

- **Good communication:**

This means setting up a communication system that allows for more exchange of each other's missions, and objectives, but also needs, professional ambitions, etc. As an HR professional, your role is to accompany the organisation in setting up this communication and to ensure that it remains healthy and benevolent.



Activity 4: *What actions can you implement in your organisation to foster this good communication? e.g.: annual professional interview...*

- **Putting employees in charge of the organisation:**

Employees need to feel that they have a role to play in the organisation and that their actions have an impact. It is important to show them that they are at the heart of the organisation's strategy.



Activity 5: *As an HR professional, what actions can you take with your employees to reinforce this sense of action and impact?*

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- **Taking care of the mental and physical health of employees even at a distance:**

It is necessary to create a healthy remote environment and to have a well-being strategy. The role of the HR professional here is to build and foster this environment. He/she is in charge of accompanying employees to find the necessary solutions to their malaise (redirecting them to specialised professionals, accompanying them in conflict resolution, etc.).



Activity 6: *What is your organisation's well-being strategy? And what is your role as an HR professional (in a few words)?*

- **Recognise the work done:**

It is important to highlight the positive achievements of your employees and this can be done by recognising their work orally, in writing or through certain material benefits.



Activity 7: *Have you, in the last two months, valued the achievements, performance or actions of an employee? If yes, how? If not, what could you have valued?*

- **Feedback:**

Allow employees to provide feedback on the organisation and listen to their positive and negative comments.



Activity 8: *What digital tools can you use to collect feedback from your employees?*

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SESSION 5 - HOW CAN WE ENSURE THE WELL-BEING AND COMMITMENT OF EMPLOYEES?

The link between well-being and engagement is quite close, as one influences the other. Thus, actions taken to promote one will have an impact on the other. Therefore, this session deals with practices that enable well-being and employee engagement at the same time, without differentiation. There are, of course, some specificities that will be mentioned, as their impact will not necessarily be the same.

Session 4 highlighted the role of the HR professional in engaging remote employees. Session 5 proposes tools and activities to be implemented to engage employees and promote their well-being at work.

1. Strengthen team spirit, the feeling of inclusion within a group.

There are many tools available to strengthen team spirit and enable everyone to find and take their place in a remote team. Most of these tools are available in the form of team-building activities that strengthen camaraderie, communication and leadership skills. The whole team comes together online in a setting that strengthens team relationships and makes collaboration more effective.

Here is a selection of videos containing several team building/teamwork activities that you can easily implement with your team(s).



Videos with other activities:

- 5 Zoom, Virtual, or Team Building Activities: [IDEAS FOR VIRTUAL OR REMOTE TEAMS]: <https://youtu.be/-KfIXKhN2Uc>
- Example: Quick Virtual Team Activity - You Rock! <https://youtu.be/kfmI14IcI7w>
- Best Virtual Team Building Activities | Simple Team Building Activities for Remote Work https://youtu.be/gSXX32_H2SQ

2. Setting up a structured online working environment

The management of an online team requires the definition of a framework of activities and the establishment of an environment that allows for the exchange and performance of employees. This is where the implementation of management and communication tools comes into play. To ensure the commitment of your employees,



it is necessary to ensure that they have all the technical and practical means to carry out their missions and strengthen their performance.

This may involve:

- Choosing the most appropriate means of communication (email, Zoom, Microsoft teams, etc.).
- Defining the frequency of communication/meetings
- Setting up a space to exchange information and content...
- Etc.

This training is packed with tips to help you create a telework-friendly environment that promotes the well-being and performance of your employees. In addition, the Toolkit for Virtual Team leaders, HR professionals and Managers contains several tools to help you create the right environment for your team and your goals.

3. Encourage health and wellness (online sports session for example)

Your team's health should be a priority. If your employees get sick or don't feel well, they will perform poorly or not at all. Moreover, all studies show that a healthy diet and exercise are important for good health. As an HR professional, you can propose the setting up of online activities to promote healthy habits. This could be creating a wellness programme for your team (30 days of yoga, one month of daily walks, etc.), or creating a group moment such as an online sports session or cooking class.

These activities will show that you care about their health, and will also bring employees closer together while maintaining their health.

4. Offering online training and career advancement opportunities

Lifelong learning is a lever for commitment to work, enabling employees to be motivated and to build their professional future. To take into account the wishes of each individual and to align them with the company's strategy, it is necessary to conduct an HR policy that includes real talent management. Opening up the possibility of continuing education to your employees will strengthen their skills, which will be put to good use within the company.

Many online learning management systems allow you to put your training content online and distribute it to your employees or to access relevant training content. You can offer training according to the needs, wishes and requirements of your employees. A good, productive way to keep oneself occupied is to watch and finish any company-

mandated training. This can allow your employees to advance in their careers in ways that will help them reach their goals.

In addition, your employees must know about possible advancement opportunities within the company. It's important to let employees know they can move up in your organization, whether they're located in the office or across the world. Remote working is not a barrier to career development and can even reduce employee turnover and promote engagement instead.

5. Allocate a budget to help spice up the home office

It is essential to provide work tools adapted to the tasks entrusted. A poorly-equipped employee knows in advance that he or she will not be able to carry out the task.

The list of things to think about to promote commitment at work :

- sufficient space,
- a comfortable seat,
- a functional desk,
- a computer that doesn't "crash",
- efficient software,
- etc.

6. Remuneration

Depending on the situation (recruitment or promotion), the management and the HR team may have a financial motivation lever:

- a raise,
- an attendance bonus or a bonus based on objectives,
- benefits,
- or any other type of bonus should be possible to offer an attractive and motivating package.

When an employee who is committed to his or her work achieves concrete results but sees his or her pay stagnate for too long, he or she may be tempted to apply elsewhere to obtain satisfaction.



Tips/Advice

Here are some examples of practices that can enhance employee wellbeing and engagement. This list is not exhaustive.

Do not hesitate to look for other activities, tools or actions to implement with your teams.

It is important to take into account the opinions and recommendations of your staff. They will be able to identify their needs and the activities required.